Internal Communication Study
Final Report

Public Affairs Division
January 1996

Missouri Highway and
Transportation Department

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WHY STUDY INTERNAL COMMUNICATION?

Excellent customer service is everyone's goal. An important part of customer service is our ability to share information internally, so everyone knows what going on and what needs to be done. When groups of department employees get together to improve our products and services, communication invariably comes up as an important improvement area.

As our department's commitment to the quality improvement philosophy grows and more employees become empowered to implement their own decisions, effective communication within the department has become extremely important.

This study was designed to find out how best to meet the department's growing communication needs. The study began in June 1995 to examine all department internal communication to find out what was working and what needed improvement. A study team was formed in Public Affairs consisting of Jeff Briggs, Jim Coleman and Steve Miller.

Several factors motivated the team to begin the study.

- ◆ There has been no way to track the effectiveness of internal communication because no study of this kind has ever been done at MHTD.

- ◆ Communication efforts must be cost-effective. Cost savings associated with the Short-Term Action Plan require comprehensive evaluation of all department products and services.

- ◆ Each of the department's communication efforts should have a clear purpose. Information is shared, but we don't always know what we're trying to accomplish.

The team determined that limiting the study to an evaluation of existing communication tools would limit the improvements as well. So rather than base the study on the state of what currently exists, the team undertook the more ambitious task of determining the department's internal communication needs and proposing new or improved systems to address them.

The following vision and mission statement, developed by the study team, guided the study.

Vision

The Missouri Highway and Transportation Department will be a national leader in internal communication by ensuring that:

- ◆ *all communication is clear, relevant, timely, understood and achieves its desired goal;*
- ◆ *all employees have the information essential to their jobs; and*
- ◆ *information sharing is recognized as an important part of every employee's job.*

Mission

- *To effectively communicate at all levels the information that is important to employee performance and development.*

The team also determined that effective communication is more than just from the top down. So the study evaluated communication at all levels of the department, including supervisors to employees, districts to headquarters, and offices to field and back again.

Because communication is so important to all our jobs, the study covered a wide range of topics and responsibilities. The following solutions cannot be implemented by any one group of people. For these improvements to succeed, it's important that top management visibly support them and employees all over the state understand and accept them.

STUDY AT A GLANCE

Problem Areas:

- ► Timeliness
- ► Distribution
- ► Consistency
- ► Clarity
- ► Access

1996 solutions

- ➤ department communication philosophy
- ➤ statewide quarterly publication
- ➤ district communication professionals
- ➤ existing publications and methods
- ➤ fax machines in all department buildings
- ➤ MHTD services directory
- ➤ regular work area meetings
- ➤ issue-specific information meetings
- ➤ commercial delivery services
- ➤ other ideas to test

Beyond 1996 solutions

- ➤ computers in all department locations
- ➤ monthly district newsletters
- ➤ communication training for all supervisors
- ➤ evaluate supervisors' communication skills
- ➤ recognition of employees' communication skills
- ➤ MHTD-TV / satellite feeds / interactive video

HOW THE STUDY WAS CONDUCTED

☑ Goals Outlined

Preliminary interviews were conducted with top management to help determine what role internal communication plays and what areas should be emphasized. The managers agreed communication is important to the success of MHTD and that information should be shared openly and honestly. But there was little consensus on the department's long-term communication goals and what should be emphasized.

The study team then developed vision and mission statements to guide the study efforts. All aspects of the study are based on these statements (see introduction). To be meaningful, the raw data collected must be analyzed and measured against what's listed in the vision and mission -- otherwise it's just useless data. Data is not information. The team also developed a timeline and plans for communicating study progress.

Several other state departments of transportation (DOT) were contacted to see what could be learned from internal communication studies conducted elsewhere. The team found that few states have conducted formal, in-depth studies. MHTD appears to be one of the leaders in this area.

To formally announce the study, a June 23 letter to all employees from Chief Engineer Joe Mickes and an announcement in the *MHTDnews* outlined the study and how it would work. The message told employees to prepare for the hiatus of the *MHTDnews* and the arrival of a communication survey that everyone would receive shortly.

☑ Statewide Survey Gathers Data

The internal communication survey that all employees and retirees received in mid-August provided crucial information. The study is based on an assessment of information needs, and the survey provided the data we needed. The study team received about 3,000 responses. That's a response rate of about 30 percent -- only 4 or 5 percent is needed to be statistically accurate.

Several data collection experts from outside the department assisted in the surveying effort. The team believes the results provide the best and most extensive data this department has ever collected on employee information needs. The survey results showed areas where information was most needed and problem areas within our current communication system. Surveys and results are attached.

Retiree results were put into a separate category, since that group is a secondary external audience, and as such doesn't affect the study's vision and mission. But their information needs were addressed in the study, and the retiree data is available if needed.

☑ Focus Groups Provide Details

The survey results indicated problem areas, but didn't always tell specifically what the problems were. To get details on the causes and specifics of communication problems, and for some suggestions on how to fix them, the study team conducted several focus groups around the state.

The team met with groups of employees in Hannibal, St. Louis, Jefferson City and Rolla to get their ideas. Focus group participants were randomly selected from several employee categories to represent the opinions of their entire district or office. A summary of the focus group discussions is attached.

☑ Solutions and Recommendations Developed

By combining the survey results with the focus group data, all the details necessary to begin working on solutions were in place. An important part of the data analysis was grouping the results into five problem areas. This allowed the team to concentrate on the root causes of what's wrong with our current communication system, then use the data on information needs to address those areas. Details on the five problem areas are in the next section of the report.

The final step was to use the data, vision and mission statements, and the study team's professional expertise to develop solutions and recommendations for internal communication improvements. These are broken into short-term (1996 implementation) and long-term (beyond 1996) solutions in this report.

IMPROVEMENT AREAS

A summary of the communication areas that need improvement
as compiled from survey and focus group data

Timeliness

A common complaint is that information is old when it's received; 63 percent of the survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed on that point, making it the highest single frustration *(question 5)*. Focus groups added that information requiring quick turnaround time is a particular problem. Without adequate time to deal with this type of material they can't do their jobs properly, they said.

Distribution

This was the most frequently heard concern in the focus groups. There's no standard method of getting information to everyone -- some use bulletin boards, some make copies for everyone, some are told face to face and some don't receive anything. This means some employees are better informed than others in areas everyone should be informed about. According to the survey, more than half of employees feel they don't receive enough information. The number is even higher for field employees.

Consistency

All employees don't always receive the same message. Conflicting or constantly changing messages are also a problem. Some employees don't receive any information from supervisors, some receive different messages from different people, and some sense they're not hearing everything that's going on. Nearly half the employees surveyed said information they receive isn't straightforward. Focus groups clarified this point by explaining that they feel they're not being told everything that's happening on some issues.

Clarity

Much of the information employees receive is unclear in some way. In many cases, updated information on a project or issue is passed on without a basic explanation of why it's being done or what happened earlier in the process. In other cases, employees don't receive all the information so unanswered questions remain.

Access

This problem area is dealt with less specifically in the group responses, but seems to be at the heart of some of their concerns. Some supervisors don't let their employees look at certain information (personnel manuals, for example), which creates feelings of being left out or that someone is hiding something. Others said they don't know who to contact if they have problems or suggestions. Some focus group participants said they don't get responses from people they do contact.

1996 Solutions

➤ Department communication philosophy

Objective: To establish the importance of communication in department operations and provide a standard by which communication efforts can be measured.

A top management communication philosophy should outline the importance of communication in the department's operations and helps emphasize the communication vision and mission. The philosophy should be a written document available to all employees. It should include a variety of concepts including supervisory responsibility for keeping employees informed, communicating important news quickly and having dedicated information sharing times. Information should also be prioritized so employees are quickly able to ascertain its importance.

A department communication philosophy establishes the general framework against which all communication tools and efforts can be measured. Stressing the importance of communication in a quality organization will help management achieve its goals and help employees have the information necessary for them to do their jobs.

Implementation Plan: A department communication philosophy will be developed by Public Affairs staff and top management within the first quarter of 1996.

Cost: The costs associated with developing a communication philosophy are negligible.

➤ Statewide quarterly publication

Objective: To provide employees with a regularly scheduled publication that contains information about department direction, management philosophy, significant department achievements and team accomplishments.

There are many publications vying for readers' attention, and to be successful, a publication must be attractive, informative, easy to read and visually stimulating. The department's quarterly publication will be flashy and lively and will contain graphics and photography similar to *USA Today* and other highly successful newspapers and magazines. The publication will project a positive, progressive image for the department, which should improve morale by making employees feel good about working for the department. The publication will be distributed at work, which is where employees said they prefer to receive information. Retirees and others may receive the publication upon request.

Surveys also ranked a statewide employee publication as the second most-favored method of receiving information, next to face-to-face meetings. A quarterly publication is more cost-effective than a monthly, and the type of information envisioned in it doesn't require a monthly frequency.

The publication will contain the statewide perspective employees told us they wanted as well as other information that is important but not needed quickly. Topics employees rated important include

benefits, top management values and direction, customer needs and human resource policies. The quarterly publication will not contain personal news because both our surveys and focus groups said employees don't want this type of information.

Implementation Plan: The quarterly publication will be prepared by Public Affairs staff, with input from all areas of MHTD. The publication will be printed either by a commercial printer or the State Printing Center. The first issue will appear in April 1996. Subsequent issues are scheduled for July, October and January.

Cost: A publication of this type will cost approximately $10,000 to $15,000 an issue for an annual cost of about $60,000. In comparison, annual production and distribution costs for the *MHTDnews* were more than $75,000 -- $50,000 in production costs, $25,000 in mailing costs. Mailing costs for the quarterly publication will be minimal since the bulk of the publication will be distributed at work. The publication will be prepared by existing staff.

➤ District communication professionals

Objective: To provide professional communicators in all districts to coordinate and promote communication efforts.

Professional communicators can help guide and implement district communication efforts and be a catalyst for making communication a high priority. District communication professionals will be a direct communication resource and will be responsible for the district newsletters mentioned in the recommendations to be implemented beyond 1996. Districts 4 and 6 currently have community relations specialists.

Implementation Plan: Public Affairs will assist district engineers with identification of district needs, candidate selection, advertisements and interviews. District need identification will begin in the first quarter of 1996. Professional communication staff should be hired by year's end for districts 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 8, 9 and 10.

Cost: It would cost approximately $240,000 per year (eight at $30,000). However, the entire cost wouldn't be incurred the first year due to staggered hiring.

➤ Existing publications and methods

Objective: To increase timely information dissemination throughout the department.

Clear objectives should be developed for all current communication vehicles to evaluate their effectiveness. Continuing some current publications addresses timeliness, distribution and consistency.

> *Employee-grams* -- These deal with timely and important topics and should be
> continued. It's still the best way to get information to all employees quickly.

Executive Summary -- The *Executive Summary* is a solution in search of a problem. Everything currently published in it can be better covered through periodic computer notes because the summary's entire target audience -- senior management and management teams -- has computers. Any division or district with news can share it instantly with whomever needs it. The computer method is faster, cheaper, easier and more accessible to all. Important information not covered by electronic mail updates will be included in the statewide quarterly publication and district newsletters. We should discontinue the use of the *Executive Summary*.

Updates -- These also deal with important, fast-breaking news that needs to be disseminated quickly through fax machines and should be continued.

Letters and Inter Office Correspondence (IOC) -- These are more personalized and are an excellent tool for reaching a wide or select audience. Distributing these items at work rather than mailing to employees' homes is cost-effective and is reinforced by our surveys and focus groups, both of which dislike receiving work-related material at home.

Informal meetings/manager forums -- These provide excellent forums for management to meet face-to-face with employees for good two-way communication.

Implementation Plan: These publications and vehicles are used on an as-needed basis and will appear throughout the year as deemed necessary.

Cost: The costs associated with the above recommendation are less than $6,000 per year.

➤ Fax machines in all department buildings

Objective: *To provide an instantaneous communication link with remote locations.*

This solution is inexpensive and can be accomplished quickly. Most buildings already have phone lines, so all that's needed is an inexpensive fax machine. Fax machines also provide for two-way communication and were mentioned by our focus groups as a good way to communicate with maintenance buildings that are distant from the district office. Fax machines in all department buildings address timeliness, lack of standard distribution, lack of consistent messages and information accessibility.

Implementation Plan: Equipment and Procurement should work with Information Systems to develop machine specifications and also work with the divisions of Maintenance and Traffic and Construction to determine machine placement and numbers needs. The machines should be in place sometime in the third quarter of 1996.

Cost: It would cost approximately $105,000 to provide $300 fax machines in maintenance buildings and construction offices that don't currently have them. The cost would probably be substantially lower because of volume purchases and improved technology.

➤ MHTD services directory

Objective: *To provide a comprehensive source of department information that allows employees to locate specific resources to fulfill their needs.*

This directory, which could be developed on the computer as well as in book form, will guide employees to department services and product areas and also equip them to better respond to external customer requests. The directory will also be a useful tool for the Customer Service Centers. This idea was heartily supported by our focus groups. A services directory addresses problems of information accessibility and timeliness.

Implementation Plan: Public Affairs will work with the plan scoping team and customer service centers to develop the directory, which could be compiled by the end of the second quarter of 1996.

Cost: There would be a minimal cost involved in printing the directory.

➤ Regularly scheduled work-area meetings

Objective: *To provide an ongoing forum for information sharing and discussion.*

Employees rated face-to-face meetings as one of the top ways they like to be informed. Regular meetings provide opportunities for two-way information sharing. Regular work-area meetings help improve timeliness, lack of standard distribution, lack of clear and consistent messages and information accessibility.

Implementation Plan: Division and district managers should work to stress the importance of these meetings. This would be an on-going process that could begin immediately.

Cost: None.

➤ Issue-specific information meetings

Objective: *To provide employees with a forum for receiving information on important topics.*

This is an expansion of the brown-bag concept through which meetings are held to discuss a variety of department and other programs of interest to employees. These meetings would be scheduled on an as-needed basis to discuss big issues that are complex and require face-to-face communication from experts. Employees said face-to-face meetings are the preferred way they like to receive information. These meetings help address the issue of employees not getting the full picture and feeling that information is withheld from them. Regular information meetings improve timeliness, lack of clear and consistent messages and information accessibility.

Implementation Plan: Division and district managers should work to stress the importance and usefulness of these meetings. Such meetings can be implemented immediately.

Cost: Minimal.

➤ Commercial delivery services

Objective: To ensure quick delivery of time-sensitive information.

The department currently relies heavily on its internal freight trucks for movement of mail. This system is fine if time isn't a factor, but many items need to move quickly. Using department delivery capabilities to move time-sensitive material often results in untimely and many times after the fact delivery. Both our survey and focus groups said information is often old when they receive it and that mail is filtered by too many people before it gets to them.

Current department mail distribution methods route items through several different points, which results in delays. Our focus groups also said because everyone didn't receive information at the same time, employees felt management was withholding information. Staff often don't have sufficient time to respond or attend meetings. The U.S. Post Office, Federal Express, UPS and other shippers provide similar services and can move dated materials quickly. All department offices, including maintenance buildings, have mail service, and more frequent use should be made of this. Mailroom staff should be encouraged to explore fast and efficient means of shipment. Use of other carriers improves timeliness, standard distribution and information accessibility.

Implementation Plan: Management should encourage divisions and districts to explore the best ways to send material to employees.

Cost: Use of commercial delivery services will vary according to need, and an accurate cost estimate isn't possible.

Other Ideas to Test

The following recommendations should be tested to determine their effectiveness in improving department communication.
- ❑ Expanded use of conference calls instead of statewide meetings
- ❑ Expanded use of video conferencing capabilities for meetings
- ❑ Office intercom systems
- ❑ Posting messages in restrooms and other non-traditional locations

BEYOND 1996 SOLUTIONS

These solutions are conceptual; some may require additional data collection and testing.

➤ Computers in all department locations

Objective: *To give all employees access to current information essential to their jobs. Computer access allows immediate dissemination of information statewide and provides a two-way communication link for quick response and feedback.*

Although computers and computer mail were ranked low on the survey, the reason wasn't dislike for the machines. Focus group participants explained that computers were ranked low because they didn't have them. Through interviews, we found computers usage was much heavier in other departments of transportation across the nation. A statewide computer network, along with development of the Internet and homepages for the department, which many other DOTs are already using, will establish a constant communication link.

Accessibility and timeliness are two areas this solution addresses directly. Under the current system, employees can't access much of the information that's available. Once they get it, it's often outdated. With computers in all locations, they'll have access, and news can be sent to everyone simultaneously.

Cost figures for this solution are included in the department's Information Strategic Plan (ISP).

➤ Monthly district newsletters

Objective: *to provide district employees with information about their specific area and its accomplishments, including promotions, major projects and news that's not appropriate for the statewide quarterly publication.*

These newsletters will provide timely, local information that's meaningful to district employees. Information covered in district newsletters can include promotions and the project-specific information our focus groups and survey said they wanted. District newsletters will also focus on customer needs and other items of a district-wide scope. District newsletters ranked high on the survey as an information source. Many districts already have newsletters. Those that don't should start them. The district newsletters will primarily handled by the district communication professionals.

District newsletters address the areas of timeliness, accessible information, lack of clear and consistent messages and standard distribution.

➤ Communication training for all supervisors

Objective: To equip supervisors with the information, skills and techniques to communicate effectively with their employees. Well-informed employees are the keys to department success. The first link to them is supervisors.

Many focus group participants said their supervisors withheld information from them, decided what news was important to them or simply didn't give employees time to inform themselves. The survey indicated that more than half of MHTD employees feel they're not getting enough information.

The department has to make sure employees have access to and are getting, in a timely and consistent manner, the information distributed to supervisors. Supervisors must be shown communication is important to MHTD and must be trained to communicate effectively.

This training would be different than any other received by department supervisors. Much like media training, class participants would be given real communication situations and challenges the department faces and be asked to handle it.

➤ Evaluate supervisors' communication skills

Objective: To establish and emphasize that communication is important to the future of MHTD. Evaluation of supervisors' communication skills and techniques, coupled with training in this area, will ensure they understand it is required and that it is part of their individual responsibility.

In order to illustrate the importance of communication at MHTD, management must hold all managers and supervisors accountable for effectively sharing information with their employees. This should be done by evaluating supervisors' communication skills on an individual basis as part of annual performance appraisals. It must be made clear to every employee that communication is highly valued by this department.

The department has to make sure employees are receiving in a timely and consistent manner the information that is distributed to supervisors. Clarity of department messages will also improve if supervisors are judged in part by how effectively they convey messages to their employees.

➤ Recognition of employees' communication skills

Objective: To emphasize to all employees that communication is key to everyone's job

Study results from the survey and focus groups indicated that MHTD employees want to be informed on department issues but aren't. Employees who are good communicators should be rewarded to reinforce desired behaviors. Various incentive programs and methods should be tested.

Communication is not a one-way process. If employees are encouraged seek out information on department issues, they'll be more completely informed. Management of any organization has a responsibility to inform, but if employees have a stake in being informed, they'll take a more active role in the process, resulting in better information sharing and morale. Employees have to develop individual responsibility for gathering information.

➤ MHTD-TV / Satellite feeds / Interactive video

Objective: To provide immediate response to employees' information and training needs in a new way that communicates effectively and uses current technology and resources efficiently.

This will allow MHTD to get an urgent message from management, a new training technique or a major development in employee benefits to all employees quickly. Only large-scale projects or communication needs will be addressed by this method. Visual communication creates a powerful image and allows for demonstration, which is ideal for training.

Employees said they want more information, they want it quickly and they want it to be straightforward. What's more straightforward than hearing it directly from the chief engineer? What's quicker than broadcasting it statewide on television? It's not only informative, but it could also be enjoyable.

BACKUP MATERIAL

- Chief Engineer's letter announcing study

- Study announcement in *MHTDnews*

- Internal Communication Study timeline

- Flyer mailed out with surveys

- Employee survey

- Retiree survey

- Preliminary survey data report - employee and retiree base data

- Complete employee survey data report

- Focus group topics

- Focus group emphasis areas
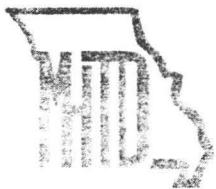
June 23, 1995

To All *MHTDnews* Readers:

This is an exciting time for me. I haven't been chief engineer for very long, yet I've seen so many improvements in the way this department does business. Most of these changes are due to you -- your ideas, improvements in your work processes and results from your quality improvement teams.

The most important aspect of all our department improvements is communication. Nothing new ever works for very long unless we're sharing ideas with each other. So communication in the department is a high priority for me.

In the next few months, the department will conduct an extensive internal communication study to help us figure out the best ways to get you the information you want and need. As you know, one of the most important ways we all communicate is through the *MHTDnews*.

I started reading our department newspaper way back in 1958 when I was a new employee. In all that time it hasn't changed that much, even though our communication needs have grown by leaps and bounds. We need to re-examine this publication to make sure it's doing the best possible job of providing all the latest information that's important to us.

So we're going to replace the *MHTDnews* with other communication vehicles for the next few months during our communication study. This will give us the staff time and resources needed to study it thoroughly and determine what's good about it and what needs to be improved.
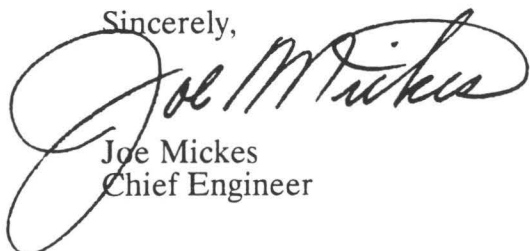
Please don't worry about missing out on what's happening in our department. All of us, in Jefferson City as well as the districts, will keep you informed on department activities during the study period. The only difference is that you won't get the same monthly mailing you're used to receiving.

In a few weeks, each of you will have a chance to give us your opinions by filling out a survey. These surveys are very important, because we'll use them to help guide our communication decisions.

I'm really anxious to hear what you think of our efforts. Who knows? Maybe you'll point out some really interesting or important news items we've been missing. This will give us a chance to focus on what you really need for your jobs, or maybe on items that you would enjoy reading.

Please be sure to share your ideas with us when you receive the survey. We're counting on you to tell us what you think is important. I look forward to hearing from you!

Sincerely,

Joe Mickes
Chief Engineer

"Our mission is to provide a quality transportation system that responds to Missourians' demands and enhances the state's growth and prosperity."

PASS IT ON
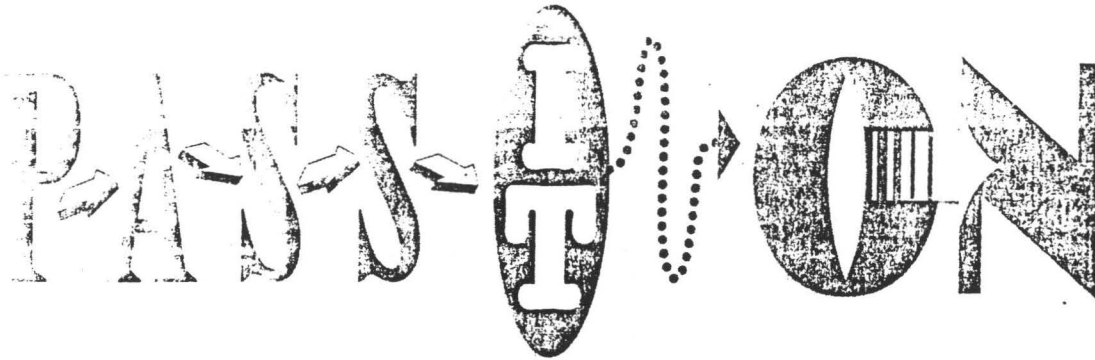
MHTD News on vacation while Public Affairs studies internal communication

In the next few months, the Public Affairs Division will be taking an in-depth look at MHTD internal communication. One way we will do this is by asking for your input to find out what's most important for you to know as an employee. Your needs are important to this process, but we first have to find out exactly what they are and how best to meet them.

While we're gathering information about employee communication, the *MHTD News* will be taking a vacation. The paper will not be printed for a few months; we're not yet sure how long. The July issue, the one you're reading now, is the last one you'll receive for a while.

We're not only looking at the *MHTD News*, but also at all of the department's communication tools. The idea is to take a step back, look at what we're doing and make sure what we're doing is effective.

Thanks for your cooperation.

The Public Affairs staff

Sue Muck, director	Jim Dickson
Kathryn Nelson	Steve Forsythe
Lisa Austin	Carol Lueckenhoff
Jeff Briggs	Steve Miller
Rosalie Clark	Shirley Perkins
Jim Coleman	Anita Randolph
Sheila Curley	Linda Wilson

The *MHTD News* you're holding is printed on recycled paper using soybean ink.

Internal Communication Study Timeline
August 1995

July 1: July issue of *MHTDnews* is delivered. The publication is put on hiatus while the department conducts an internal communication audit.

July 1-10: Vision and mission for internal communication are written.

July 18: Vision, mission and updated study plans are communicated to Administrative Management Team. Senior Management Team kept informed.

July 10-25: Departments of Transportation and other agencies are polled for input. Data will be used to help frame survey questions and will be combined with survey results to base final decisions on.

July 17-August 5: Write customer survey, incorporating all the input gathered so far.

August 8: Internal communication survey shared with AMT.

August 16: Survey is distributed to department employees and retirees. Responses are due back by August 31.

August 16: Overview of study plans, vision and mission for internal communication, survey and other study information presented to Senior Management Team at their regular monthly meeting.

September 4-20: Surveys sent to Data Entry for compilation of data. Public Affairs should receive raw data report from Data Entry by September 22.

September 22-October 6: Internal communications subteam works on issue statements and process performance measures (PPMs). PPMs will be guided by and based on problem areas identified by customer survey data.

September 25-29: Data is evaluated and condensed into report. This report will include a summary and initial analysis of the survey data. All findings reported to AMT. SMT kept informed.

September 25-October 13: Internal communication team works on solution ideas, best possible tools to meet department objectives and identified customer needs.

October 17: Final issue statements, PPMs and recommendations presented to and discussed with AMT. Concensus decision on next steps to take. SMT kept informed.

October 18-November 10: Develop communication tools to implement agreed upon solutions in order to meet previously identified objectives and customer needs.

November 14: Share proposed tools with partners. Reach concensus that this is the way to go.

November 20-December 15: Develop implementation plan. This plan will outline what the solutions and new tools are, when they will begin operation, how all affected parties will be informed, explanation of this entire process and what data was collected. It will cover all the whos, whats, wheres, whens, whys and hows associated with the study process and its outcomes.

December 18-29: This is the period of time when we expect to be putting the implementation plan into action. Employees, retirees and all other affected parties are informed.

January: Rollout new or revised communication tools, processes and procedures as outlined in the solutions and implementation plan at appropriate times.

We need your help!

We've been hard at work since you received my letter a few weeks ago announcing the department's internal communication study. We're in the early stages of the study, which includes developing goals and ideas for improvement.

Here's where we need your help. The information we get from the attached survey will be very important when decisions on how we'll communicate in the future are made. Please fill it out as completely as you can and send it back in the enclosed postage-paid envelope by August 31.

The survey is being sent to all employees and retirees, so we'll get detailed information on what our customers need and how they'd like to receive it. It's important to remember that this is not a survey about the *MHTDnews* or any other current communication product; we need to know basic information that will help all of us share information more effectively.

Thanks for your help!

Joe Mickes
Chief Engineer

Missouri Highway and Transportation Department

Internal Communication Survey

Communication is one of the keys to success. To make sure all employees are informed effectively, we're studying MHTD internal communication. The study covers all information lines and methods, not just those coming from the Main Office. This survey is just one piece of the research effort, but an important one. Please take a few minutes and complete this survey. Your answers will guide communication improvements. Thank you.

I. Communication

1. How well have you been informed about the following topics?

   (please circle the one number per line that best represents your opinion)

	Poor		Average		Good
a. employee benefits (salaries, insurance)	1	2	3	4	5
b. human resource policies	1	2	3	4	5
c. MHTD programs and events	1	2	3	4	5
d. MHTD major accomplishments	1	2	3	4	5
e. team information and success stories	1	2	3	4	5
f. top management's values and direction	1	2	3	4	5
g. customer needs	1	2	3	4	5
h. staff changes / promotions	1	2	3	4	5
i. national transportation news	1	2	3	4	5
j. highway and transportation commission action	1	2	3	4	5

2. Are you interested in receiving information primarily about your district/division or all districts and the Main Office?

   (choose best answer)   a. ☐ primarily interested in information from my district/division

   b. ☐ interested in information from all districts and the Main Office

3. How important to you is information on the following topics?

   (please circle the one number per line that best represents your opinion)

	Not important				Very important
a. employee benefits (salaries, insurance)	1	2	3	4	5
b. human resource policies	1	2	3	4	5
c. MHTD programs and events	1	2	3	4	5
d. MHTD major accomplishments	1	2	3	4	5
e. team information and success stories	1	2	3	4	5
f. top management's values and direction	1	2	3	4	5
g. MHTD customer needs	1	2	3	4	5
h. staff changes / promotions	1	2	3	4	5
i. national transportation news	1	2	3	4	5
j. highway and transportation commission action	1	2	3	4	5
k. personal news (births, weddings, vacations)	1	2	3	4	5
l. service anniversaries / retirements / obituaries	1	2	3	4	5

4. Please rate how well the following communication tools inform you.

   (please circle the one number per line that best represents your opinion)

	Poor		Average		Good
a. statewide employee newsletter	1	2	3	4	5
b. letters to employees	1	2	3	4	5
c. MHTD single-sheet publications	1	2	3	4	5
d. district newsletters	1	2	3	4	5
e. memos (Inter Office Correspondence)	1	2	3	4	5
f. computer mail	1	2	3	4	5
g. brochures / flyers	1	2	3	4	5
h. videos	1	2	3	4	5
i. staff / crew meetings	1	2	3	4	5
j. other _____	1	2	3	4	5

5. Please circle the number that best indicates the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement below about MHTD communication.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
a. information is old when I get it	1	2	3	4	5
b. news is repeated in various forms	1	2	3	4	5
c. information is hard to understand	1	2	3	4	5
d. news isn't relevant to my job	1	2	3	4	5
e. I receive too much information	1	2	3	4	5
f. I don't receive enough information	1	2	3	4	5
g. I can't tell what news is important	1	2	3	4	5
h. information isn't straightforward	1	2	3	4	5
i. other _____	1	2	3	4	5

6. Rate the following ways you receive MHTD information.

   (please circle the one number per line that best represents your opinion)

	Poor		Average		Good
a. computer	1	2	3	4	5
b. bulletin board	1	2	3	4	5
c. face-to-face meeting	1	2	3	4	5
d. mailed to your home	1	2	3	4	5
e. handed out at work	1	2	3	4	5
f. routed office copy	1	2	3	4	5

7. Any comments or improvement ideas: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

II. Personal information

Please take a few minutes and complete the following section. It will provide information about you that will help make better use of the data this survey collects.

8. What is your primary work location?   a. ☐ field   b. ☐ office

9. In what age group do you fall?   a. ☐ under 25   c. ☐ 41-55
   b. ☐ 26-40   d. ☐ over 55

10. How many years have you been with MHTD?   a. ☐ 1-5   c. ☐ 11-20
    b. ☐ 6-10   d. ☐ more than 20

*Please return completed survey **by August 31** to Public Affairs with the enclosed postage-paid envelope, through department mail or fax to (314) 526-4859.*

Thank you!

Missouri Highway and Transportation Department
Internal Communication Survey

Communication is one of the keys to department success. To make sure we're communicating effectively, we're studying MHTD communication. This survey is just one piece of the research effort, but an important one. Please take a few minutes and complete this survey. Your answers will guide communication improvements. Thank you.

1. How well have you been informed about the following topics?
   (please circle the one number per line that best represents your opinion)

	Poor		Average		Good
a. benefits (salaries, insurance)	1	2	3	4	5
b. human resource policies	1	2	3	4	5
c. MHTD programs and events	1	2	3	4	5
d. MHTD major accomplishments	1	2	3	4	5
e. team information and success stories	1	2	3	4	5
f. top management's values and direction	1	2	3	4	5
g. customer needs	1	2	3	4	5
h. staff changes / promotions	1	2	3	4	5
i. national transportation news	1	2	3	4	5

2. Are you interested in receiving information on a specific district/division or all districts and the Main Office?

   (choose best answer)
   a. ☐ interested in information from a specific district/division
   b. ☐ interested in information from all districts and the Main Office

3. How important to you is receiving information on the following topics?
   (please circle the one number per line that best represents your opinion)

	Not important			Very important	
a. benefits (salaries, insurance)	1	2	3	4	5
b. human resource policies	1	2	3	4	5
c. MHTD programs and events	1	2	3	4	5
d. MHTD major accomplishments	1	2	3	4	5
e. team information and success stories	1	2	3	4	5
f. top management's values and direction	1	2	3	4	5
g. MHTD customer needs	1	2	3	4	5
h. staff changes / promotions	1	2	3	4	5
i. national transportation news	1	2	3	4	5
i. personal news (births, weddings, vacations)	1	2	3	4	5
i. service anniversaries / retirements / obituaries	1	2	3	4	5

4. Please rate how well the following communication tools inform you.
   (please circle the one number per line that best represents your opinion)

	Poor		Average		Good
a. statewide employee publication	1	2	3	4	5
b. letters	1	2	3	4	5
c. district newsletters	1	2	3	4	5
d. other _____	1	2	3	4	5

5. Please circle the number that best indicates the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement below about MHTD communication.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
a. information is old when I get it	1	2	3	4	5
b. information is hard to understand	1	2	3	4	5
c. I receive too much information	1	2	3	4	5
d. I don't receive enough information	1	2	3	4	5
e. information isn't straightforward	1	2	3	4	5
f. other _____	1	2	3	4	5

6. Any comments or improvement ideas: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

*Please return completed survey **by August 31** to Public Affairs
with the enclosed postage-paid envelope or fax to (314) 526-4859.*

Thank you!

Internal Communication Study
Preliminary Report - Survey Data
September 29, 1995

Internal communication surveys were sent to all employees and retirees in mid-August. We received 2,962 responses. That's a return rate of about 30 percent.

I. How well have you been informed on the following topics?

percentage rating above average or good

	employees	retirees
employee benefits	40	57
human resource policies	18	34
MHTD programs and events	25	47
MHTD major accomplishments	31	55
team info and success stories	16	45
top mgmt values and direction	15	40
customer needs	33	29
staff changes / promotions	34	49
national transportation news	16	41
commission action	22	*

* question not asked

2. Are you interested in receiving information primarily about your division/district or all districts and the Main Office?

Employees - 64 percent want all districts and Main Office info

Retirees - 71 percent want all district and Main Office info

3. How important to you is information on the following topics?

	percentage rating it important or very important	
	employees	**retirees**
employee benefits	95	90
human resource policies	67	48
MHTD programs and events	57	67
MHTD major accomplishments	59	67
team info and success stories	50	47
top mgmt values and direction	73	60
customer needs	78	58
staff changes / promotions	67	66
national transportation news	45	53
commission action	47	*
personal news	24	43
service anniv / obits / retirements	46	81

* question not asked

4. Please rate how well the following communication tools inform you?

	percentage rating it above average or good	
	employees	**retirees**
employee newsletter / publication	47	58
letters to employees	53	57
MHTD single sheet publications	38	*
district newsletters	40	66
memos (IOCs)	38	*
computer mail	24	*
brochures / flyers	20	*
videos	19	*
staff and crew meetings	45	*

* question not asked

5. Please circle the number that best indicates the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement below about MHTD communication.

percentage agree or strongly agree

	employees	retirees
information is old when I get it	62	39
news is repeated in various forms	59	*
information is hard to understand	27	15
news isn't relevant to my job	29	*
I receive too much information	16	6
I don't receive enough information	49	36
I can't tell what's important	26	*
information isn't straightforward	47	20

* *question not asked*

6. Rate the following ways you recieve MHTD information. *(employees only)*

percentage rating above average or good

	employees
computer	17
bulletin board	22
face-to-face meeting	35
mailed to your home	33
handed out at work	43
routed office copy	26

2,127 employee responses to the Internal Communication Survey

- 412 Main Office (19 percent)
    366 office (88 percent)
    46 field   (12 percent)

- 1715 district (81 percent)
    450 office (26 percent)
    1265 field (74 percent)

Charts compiled with data excluding the non-answers.

1. How well have you been informed on the following topics?

percentage rating above average or good

	Main Office			District			
	office	field	all	office	field	all	All emps
employee benefits	47	37	45	47	35	38	**40**
human resource policies	27	29	27	23	17	18	**20**
MHTD programs and events	30	33	29	32	23	27	**27**
MHTD major accomplishments	37	31	35	38	28	31	**31**
team info and success stories	17	11	17	22	19	20	**19**
top mgmt values and direction	13	13	13	19	15	17	**16**
customer needs	18	20	18	22	20	21	**21**
staff changes / promotions	47	19	44	42	29	32	**34**
national transportation news	21	18	21	18	14	15	**16**
commission action	36	13	33	28	17	20	**22**

2. Are you interested in receiving information primarily about your division/district or all districts and the Main Office?

percentages

	Main Office			District			
	office	field	all	office	field	all	All emps
interested in information from all districts and the Main Office	84	80	84	68	56	59	**64**

3. How important to you is information on the following topics?

percentage rating it important or very important

	Main Office			District			All emps
	office	field	all	office	field	all	
employee benefits	94	95	95	96	97	96	**96**
human resource policies	79	72	78	71	63	65	**67**
MHTD programs and events	60	69	60	60	55	57	**57**
MHTD major accomplishments	63	68	64	59	58	58	**59**
team info and success stories	51	50	51	51	50	50	**52**
top mgmt values and direction	82	74	82	80	69	72	**73**
customer needs	81	78	81	79	77	77	**78**
staff changes / promotions	60	72	61	65	69	68	**67**
national transportation news	33	35	34	31	37	35	**35**
commission action	79	79	79	77	78	77	**77**
personal news	20	26	21	27	23	24	**24**
service anniv / obits / retirements	35	48	36	41	52	49	**46**

4. Please rate how well the following communication tools inform you?

percentage rating it above average or good

	Main Office			District			All emps
	office	field	all	office	field	all	
employee newsletter	48	50	48	57	45	48	**48**
letters to employees	48	52	49	59	54	55	**53**
MHTD single sheet publications	42	41	42	46	35	38	**38**
district newsletters	22	32	23	46	45	46	**42**
memos (IOCs)	46	42	45	50	32	37	**39**
computer mail	51	16	47	37	13	20	**26**
brochures / flyers	24	24	24	24	19	20	**21**
videos	16	20	16	18	22	21	**20**
staff and crew meetings	46	37	45	48	44	46	**46**

5. Please circle the number that best indicates the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement below about MHTD communication.

percentage agree or strongly agree

	Main Office			District			
	office	field	all	office	field	all	All emps
information is old when I get it	56	91	60	62	64	64	63
news is repeated in various forms	65	47	63	65	59	61	61
information is hard to understand	19	41	21	21	32	29	28
news isn't relevant to my job	26	39	28	23	32	29	29
I receive too much information	21	16	20	21	14	16	17
I don't receive enough information	42	57	43	43	56	53	51
I can't tell what's important	28	26	28	24	27	26	26
information isn't straightforward	43	42	43	42	52	49	48

6. Rate the following ways you recieve MHTD information. *(employees only)*

percentage rating above average to good

	Main Office			District			
	office	field	all	office	field	all	All emps
computer	47	2	42	29	6	12	19
bulletin board	19	18	19	20	25	24	23
face-to-face meeting	37	29	36	40	33	34	35
mailed to your home	31	35	31	33	35	34	34
handed out at work	45	31	43	51	41	44	44
routed office copy	31	18	30	38	20	25	26

1. How well have you been informed on the following topics?

percentage rating below average or poor

| | Main Office | | | District | | | |
	office	field	all	office	field	all	All emps
employee benefits	15	23	17	14	25	22	**21**
human resource policies	41	48	42	44	47	46	**46**
MHTD programs and events	25	33	25	24	33	30	**30**
MHTD major accomplishments	25	35	16	25	31	30	**29**
team info and success stories	42	56	44	42	44	43	**43**
top mgmt values and direction	57	50	56	49	57	55	**59**
customer needs	44	39	43	34	40	39	**39**
staff changes / promotions	18	48	22	26	39	35	**33**
national transportation news	44	59	45	45	51	49	**48**
commission action	25	54	29	38	48	45	**42**

3. How important to you is information on the following topics?

percentage rating it below average or not important

| | Main Office | | | District | | | |
	office	field	all	office	field	all	All emps
employee benefits	1	0	1	0	1	1	**1**
human resource policies	5	2	5	6	7	7	**6**
MHTD programs and events	6	7	6	5	7	7	**7**
MHTD major accomplishments	5	4	6	7	7	7	**7**
team info and success stories	12	15	13	13	14	13	**13**
top mgmt values and direction	4	9	5	5	8	7	**7**
customer needs	3	2	3	3	4	4	**4**
staff changes / promotions	7	2	7	7	7	7	**7**
national transportation news	20	17	19	24	22	23	**22**
commission action	4	7	4	3	5	5	**5**
personal news	48	41	48	40	42	41	**42**
service anniv / obits / retirements	28	17	27	27	16	19	**21**

4. Please rate how well the following communication tools inform you?

percentage rating it below average or poor

	Main Office			District			
	office	field	all	office	field	all	All emps
employee newsletter	14	13	15	11	12	12	**12**
letters to employees	14	15	14	12	14	13	**13**
MHTD single sheet publications	14	15	15	16	19	18	**17**
district newsletters	37	27	36	23	19	20	**23**
memos (IOCs)	20	31	21	16	28	25	**24**
computer mail	24	65	28	39	55	50	**46**
brochures / flyers	34	44	35	32	38	36	**36**
videos	52	54	52	55	50	51	**51**
staff and crew meetings	26	30	26	26	28	28	**27**

5. Please circle the number that best indicates the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement below about MHTD communication.

percentage disagree or strongly disagree

	Main Office			District			
	office	field	all	office	field	all	All emps
information is old when I get it	19	4	18	14	14	14	**15**
news is repeated in various forms	11	11	11	11	13	13	**13**
information is hard to understand	39	26	38	35	33	33	**34**
news isn't relevant to my job	36	29	35	35	31	32	**33**
I receive too much information	48	62	49	55	60	59	**57**
I don't receive enough information	22	22	22	23	17	18	**19**
I can't tell what's important	38	28	37	40	39	39	**39**
information isn't straightforward	26	22	26	21	19	20	**21**

6. Rate the following ways you recieve MHTD information. *(employees only)*

percentage rating below average to poor

| | Main Office | | | District | | | |
	office	field	all	office	field	all	All emps
computer	23	80	29	42	76	66	58
bulletin board	40	40	40	39	32	34	35
face-to-face meeting	31	40	32	29	35	33	33
mailed to your home	31	26	30	29	27	27	28
handed out at work	18	24	19	16	22	20	20
routed office copy	41	53	43	31	42	39	40

Focus group topics

1. *Customer needs:* survey said you wanted more information on this.
    - What aspects of customer needs are important to you?
    - What do you want to know?

2. *Want more department information:* survey said you don't get enough information
    - In what areas would you like more information?
    - What one thing is most important for you to be informed about?

3. *Timeliness:* the importance of this factor was evident from survey results
    - What is timely?
    - What info is most important to get on a timely basis?
    - Are there types of info where timeliness isn't important?

4. *News isn't straightforward:* survey said this was one of your frustrations
    - Not straightforward: what's meant by that?
    - Feel the dept. is honest with employees?
    - Is the dept. misleading or lying to you?

5. *Communication features*
    - any features of current communication you like / dislike?
    - why? define?
    - if you had important department info to get out to all employees quickly, how would you do it?

6. *Getting information*
    - How do you like to receive information?
    - What do you like to read?
    - describe the perfect communication system

7. *Distribution*
    - grade the department's distribution system (A B C D F) and tell why
    - how can we fix it?

8. *MHTC Action:* survey said you want more information in this area
    - What information are employees interested from commission meetings?
    - Are you interested in the commission or just the information?

9. *Focus group closer*
    - Any topics we've missed or overlooked?

Dept. direction

- want big picture
- want dept. stance on issues
- want info, not MHTC action
- fear of change -- dept. is moving too fast
- too much focus on politics/legislature
- assumed knowledge
- want statewide info
- Mercury Team info sucks
- team results not shared
- too many teams

equipment/solutions/tools

- fax (like but don't have)
- computer (like but don't have)
- copier
- U.S. mail
- bulletin board
- UPS, other carriers
- radio
- regular face to face meeting
- D.6 resource centers
- distribute at work

department communication management

- lack of shared info kills QI
- different areas handle communication differently (tools)
- managers decide to withhold info (people)

distribution

- goes through too many layers
- not getting statewide info
- don't see Commission summary
- no consistency in system; time, practice, method
- freight truck too slow
- info not received by all at same time
- don't send to home; keep work at work

timeliness

- dated material often late
- untimely info causes rushed work, mistakes

parking lot

- get info I don't care about/ meaningless
- local project info; project reports; front line employees
- whys/background/"how does it affect me?"
- employees are taxpayers too; dept. forgets that
- keep it short and sweet
- repeated info
- personal news not important

before done with study:

1. take every formal communication and determine
   - purpose
   - criteria
   - goals/objectives
   - PMs

2. formulate criteria/goals for all communication systems

3. have "solutions after next" for future